

Message Text

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UNCLAS DHAHRAN 1576

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, SA
SUBJECT: SAUDI RAILROAD NETWORK

REF: A) USDOC 21626; B) DHAHRAN 1267; C) JIDDA 6247

1. DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SAUDI GOVERNMENT RAILROAD ORGANIZATION (SGRO) INFORMED CONSUL GENERAL TODAY THAT SGRO BOARD HAS APPROVED PRELIMINARY STUDIES AND DESIGN WORK FOR EXPANSION OF RAILROAD NETWORK WEST OF RIYADH. DIRECTOR-GENERAL ADDED THAT THE MATTER IS NOW BEFORE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE WITHIN TWO OR THREE MONTHS.

2. EXPANSION OF THE RAILROAD NETWORK TO JUBAIL WAS INCLUDED IN THE SGRO BUDGET THIS YEAR, ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, BUT PLANNING MINISTRY REMOVED IT AT REQUEST OF ROYAL COMMISSION FOR JUBAIL AND YENBO TO PERMIT COMMISSION TO ENSURE THAT THE PLANNED RAILROAD LINE MESHES PROPERLY WITH JUBAIL PORT AND INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. U.S. FIRM, BECHTEL CORPORATION, IS NOW STUDYING THE PROJECT AND WILL WORK IN CONCERT WITH SGRO TO COMPLETE DESIGN WORK AND PREPARE CALLS FOR BIDS. A SENIOR BECHTEL EXECUTIVE STATES THAT SAUDI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY TURNED THE NECESSARY LAND FOR THE PROJECT OVER TO ROYAL COMMISSION DECEMBER 20, 1976. THE EXECUTIVE PREDICTS THAT COMPLETION OF THE STUDY AND BID DOCUMENTS WILL REQUIRE
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APPROXIMATELY A YEAR AND A HALF.

3. BECHTEL PLANS TO USE A PRE-SELECTED LIMITED BIDDERS LIST FOR THE TENDER. THE BECHTEL EXECUTIVE STATES HIS FIRM WELCOMES INQUIRIES FROM GOOD US FIRMS WHICH WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO THE QUALIFIED BIDDERS LIST. INQUIRIES SHOULD BE SENT TO

MR. JOHN MCQUILKIN, PROGRAM MANAGER, OR D. W. PERRYMAN,
MANAGER OF PROCUREMENT, JUBAIL PROJECT, P.O. BOX 88, DHAHRAN
AIRPORT, DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA.

4. BECHTEL/ROYAL COMMISSION ALSO ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE SAG
TO UPGRADE DAMMAM-RIYADH LINE BECAUSE OF HEAVY RAIL TRAFFIC
WHICH JUBAIL COMPLEX, PARTICULARLY PROPOSED STEEL PLANT, WILL
GENERATE.

5. NOW THAT SGRO HAS DIMINISHING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGEMENT
OF SAUDI PORTS, ALL SIGNS SUGGEST THAT IT WILL GIVE GREATER
ATTENTION TO CARE AND IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING RAILROAD NETWORK,
IRRESPECTIVE OF ANY EXPANSIONPROGRAMS REVIEWED ABOVE. AS
EXAMPLES, PLANS ARE UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE 275 KM OF MAINLINE
ROADBED AND SGRO IS ALREADY DISCUSSING WITH AT LEAST ONE US
COMPANY PLANS TO PURCHASE NEW PASSENGER CARS. THEREFORE, IF
REP OF US MANUFACTURER OF ROLLING STOCK OR RAILROAD
MAINTENANCE, COMMUNICATIONS, AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT TOURS AREA,
WE RECOMMEND THAT HE INCLUDE DHAHRAN IN HIS ITINERARY AND MAKE
INTRODUCTORY CALLS ON DAMMAM HEADQUARTERS OF SGRO. APPROPRIATE
OFFICIAL FOR US BUSINESSMEN TO CALL UPON IS ABDUL MOHSIN
BASHAWRI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL (ENGINEERING), SGRO.

6. POST WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW AND REPORT DEVELOPMENTS AS
BECHTEL/ROYAL COMMISSION AND SGRO CONSIDER EXPANSION AND
IMPROVEMENT OF SAUDI RAILROAD NETWORK.
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